

Minister's message

The new *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* leads Australia and possibly the world as the first jurisdiction to have the vast majority of police powers under one piece of legislation rather than have them strewn across more than 130 Acts.

The new Act represents the culmination of almost 10 years work and followed on from the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 1997*. The 1997 Act required a further period of consultation, review and consolidation and the result is the 2000 Act.

Police and the public now have a clear-cut and concise reference point for the majority of matters relating to all police powers and responsibilities. A great deal of the public focus has been placed on the extension of some police powers such as move-on powers.

Some people have said that the new powers were open to abuse. I disagree. The State Government does not apologise for giving the police the powers they need to do the job.

We feel that the Queensland Police Service has matured greatly in the past 10 years and is in a far better position to meet the State's crime problems head-on. The new legislation provides a balance which is reflected in its title — it is about power and responsibility.

I have every confidence that our police officers will continue to uphold the law without fear or favour and continue to exercise their powers responsibly.

There are safeguards built into the 2000 Act which are sensible and are the result of the most

thorough public consultation this State has seen.

This consultation started in 1990 with the release of the first discussion paper on police powers and continued throughout the development of this historic piece of legislation.

Apart from the consolidation of all powers and responsibilities under one Act, the new legislation will include:

- improved move-on powers to extend them to malls, racing venues, war memorials and areas where street prostitution takes place;
- new powers for special events including the Olympic Games enabling police to prevent people disrupting events inside venues; and
- improvements to arrest provisions for police.

The 2000 Act came into force with other legislation which revolutionises policing in this State.

This new legislation includes:

- new DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) testing powers which allow police to test suspects and prisoners in order to build a DNA database;
- new covert police powers which protect undercover police and provide stringent procedures for covert operations;
- new blood and urine testing powers to help victims of crime know if they have contracted a disease from an offender;
- new drug diversion laws to allow police to refer people caught with small quantities of *cannabis sativa* onto diversion programs;
- new public drunkenness laws which allow the police the



discretion to take drunks to a treatment facility or safe havens; and

- new laws on the disposal of property to give police clear cut procedures for the disposal of confiscated property.

These new powers would tip the balance back in favour of police and make the community safer.

Increasing the Queensland Police Service by record police numbers is only one side of the equation. The State Government will continue to provide funding for the Queensland Police Service to increase its numbers by an average of 325 per year over the next five years.

However, there is no point having more bodies on the ground if they are constrained by antiquated police powers and investigative tools.

The improved powers and investigative tools, like DNA testing, are vital if police are to maintain law and order in Queensland.

The next decade will be an exciting, ground-breaking period for Queensland police with new powers giving officers the tools to do the job and uphold their oath of service.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Barton', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Tom Barton, MLA
**Minister for Police and
Corrective Services**

POLICE *Vedette*

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Text: Contributing to the writing of *Police Vedette* were Michael Spinks, Nicole Maguire, Tracey Brown, Jodie Taylor, Karen Crook, Michelle Beaman and Akua Ahenkorah.

Photography: Historical photographs were supplied by the Queensland Police Service Museum and were chosen to give a historical perspective on some of the events that have influenced the evolution of policing in this State over the past century. The remaining photographs were taken by members of the Photographic Section, Queensland Police Service, Police Headquarters.

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ISSN 1325 - 1376

Statement of Purpose

Police Vedette is a free quarterly public information document intended to provide a record of initiatives and achievement, an insight into the operations of the Service and base research to interested members of the community. Each edition is themed on a particular subject and is available from police stations, district and regional offices, and Police Headquarters, Brisbane.

Layout Design: Nicola Newman, QPS
Graphic Design Services

Print Production: McDonald Printing Group

Cover Photograph

Commissioner of Police Jim O'Sullivan examines the *Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000* in the Legal Library of Queensland Police Headquarters. The 2000 Act consolidates police powers contained in more than 130 Queensland statutes and is the result of more than a decade of work. The Act became effective on 1 July 2000.

Photographer: (front cover)
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Journal Title

The word *Vedette* is the official call sign of the Queensland Police Service. It is used for all national and international communications. The title was adopted for the Queensland Police Service journal in 1977.

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Queensland Police Service Vision Statement

We are determined to be a professional police service, dedicated to excellence and committed to working in partnership with the people of Queensland to enhance the safety and security of our community.